

## **INFORMAL LONDON COUNCILS GRANTS COMMITTEE AGM**

**14 July 2021**

Minutes of the Grants Committee held on 14 July 2021 via Microsoft Teams

### **London Borough & Royal Borough:      Representative:**

Barking and Dagenham	Cllr Saima Ashraf
Barnet	Cllr Daniel Thomas
Bexley	Cllr David Leaf
Brent	Cllr Margaret McLennan
Bromley	Cllr Kate Lymer
Camden	Cllr Anna Wright
Croydon	Cllr Manju Shahul-Hameed
Hackney	Cllr Christopher Kennedy
Hammersmith and Fulham	Cllr Larry Culhane
Harrow	Cllr Sue Anderson
Havering	Cllr Viddy Persuad
Hillingdon	Cllr Martin Goddard
Kensington and Chelsea	Cllr Sarah Addenbrooke (Dep)
Kingston upon Thames	Cllr Caroline Kerr
Lewisham	Mayor Damien Egan
Newham	Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz
Redbridge	Cllr John Howard
Richmond	Cllr Gareth Roberts
Southwark	Cllr Alice McDonald
Sutton	Cllr Marian James
Waltham Forest	Cllr Ahsan Khan
Wandsworth	Cllr Jonathan Cook
Westminster	Cllr Heather Acton

Gabriela Cervera from IG Advisers was present for Item 13.

London Councils officers were in attendance.

### **1      Apologies for Absence and Announcement of Deputies**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Nesil Caliskan (LB Enfield), Cllr Anne Cyron (RB Kensington and Chelsea) and Cllr Candida Ronalds (LB Tower Hamlets).

### **2      Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

### **3      Acknowledgement of outgoing and new members**

- 3.1 Yolande Burgess, Strategy Director, London Councils, welcomed the new and returning members of the Grants Committee. She also expressed her team's appreciation to outgoing members for all their hard work on the Grants Committee.
- 3.2 Members asked for their thanks to the former members of the Grants Committee to be recorded.

#### **4 Election of Chair of the Grants Committee for the 2021-22 Municipal Year**

- 4.1 Mayor Damien Egan was nominated as the Chair of the Grants Committee by Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz (LB Newham) and seconded by Cllr David Leaf (LB Bexley).
- 4.2 There being no other nominees for the Chair, the Strategy Director declared Mayor Egan Chair of the Grants Committee and stepped down to allow the elected Chair to preside over the remainder of the meeting (to be agreed via London Councils' Urgency Procedure after the informal meeting).

#### **5 Election of Vice-Chairs for the Grants Committee for the 2021-22 Municipal Year**

- 5.1 The Chair thanked the outgoing members of the Grants committee with a special thanks to the previous Chair, Cllr Richard Watts, and called for nominations for the three Vice Chairs for 2020/21. He nominated the following members as Vice Chairs of the Grants Committee, seconded by Cllr Gareth Roberts (LB Richmond):
  - Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz (LB Newham) as the Labour Vice Chair
  - Cllr David Leaf (LB Bexley) as the Conservative Vice Chair
  - Cllr Caroline Kerr (RB Kingston) as the Liberal Democrat Vice Chair.
- 5.2 There being no other nominees, the Chair declared Mayor Fiaz, Cllr Leaf and Cllr Kerr as the Vice Chairs of the Grants Committee (to be agreed via the London Councils' Urgency Procedure following the meeting).

## **6 Election of the Grants Executive for the 2021-22 Municipal Year**

6.1 The following members were nominated (to be agreed via the London Councils' Urgency Procedure following the meeting).

- Mayor Damien Egan (LB Lewisham) – Chair (Lab)
- Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz (LB Newham) – Vice Chair (Lab)
- Cllr David Leaf (LB Bexley) – Vice Chair (Con)
- Cllr Caroline Kerr (RB Kingston) – Vice Chair (LD)
- Cllr Sue Anderson (LB Harrow) (Lab)
- Cllr Margaret McLennan (LB Brent) (Lab)
- Cllr Alice Macdonald (LB Southwark) (Lab)
- Cllr Jonathan Cook (LB Wandsworth) (Con)
- Cllr Viddy Persuad (LB Havering) (Con)
- City of London – TBC

## **7 Minutes of the Grants Committee held on 17 March 2021 (formal meeting) - for noting**

7.1 The minutes of the Grants Committee on 17 March 2021 were noted (to be agreed via the London Councils' Urgency Procedure following the meeting).

## **8 Minutes of the Grants Committee AGM held on 11 November 2020 (formal meeting) - for noting**

8.1 The minutes of the Grants Committee AGM held on 11 November 2020, which had been previously agreed, were noted.

## **9 Constitutional Matters**

9.1 The Strategy Director introduced this report which proposed an amendment to London Councils' Standing Orders to reflect the expiry of the emergency regulations made under section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. The report also included the most recent version of London Councils Scheme of Delegations.

## 9.2 The Grants Committee:

- Noted the proposed amendment to London Councils Standing Orders to disregard the Virtual Meetings Protocol
- Noted the London Councils Scheme of Delegations to officers.

## **10 Operation of Grants Committee 2021-2022**

10.1 The Strategy Director introduced this report, which informed members of the Terms of Reference for the Grants Committee and Grants Executive and set out dates for meetings in the municipal year 2021-22.

### 10.2 The Grants Committee:

- Noted the Terms of Reference for the Grants Committee and Grants Executive
- Noted the programme of meetings.

## **11 London Councils Grants Committee - Pre-Audited Financial Results 2020/21**

11.1 Frank Smith, Director of Corporate Resources at London Councils presented this report, which detailed the provisional pre-audited final accounts for London Councils Grants Committee for 2020/21:

- Covid-19 did not have a significant impact on the overall budget of the Grants Committee, as it was entirely funded by borough contributions.
- The underspend estimate had gone from c.£31,000 to c.£113,000, which was due to a combination of factors, namely: lower costs of running the offices at Southwark Street during the pandemic, lower staff costs, and underspending on behalf of the individual providers.
- The residual European Social Fund (ESF) reserves were being used to support Priority 1 and 2 grants in respect of no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Of the £945,000 set aside for this programme, payments of £618,000 had been made during 2020/21, and it was estimated that the remaining payments of £327,000 would be made during 2021/22.

- The Grants Committee has contributed £300,000 from committee reserves to support the emergency accommodation pilot project.
- The pension fund liability has increased by £234,000 from £964,000 to £1.198 million.
- The estimated reserves of £734,000, equating to 11% of the total budget, was above the established Grants Committee benchmark of £250,000 or 3.75%.
- Grant Thornton LLP would audit the Grants Committee's accounts for 2020/21 during August 2021. The accounts would then be presented to the London Councils' Audit Committee, along with the annual audit report, for approval on 16 September 2021.

11.2 In response to Cllr Cook's question about the increase in the pension liability fund, the Director of Corporate Resources said that this was subject to large fluctuations and that it would only become a problem should London Councils cease to exist as an entity. He assured the Committee that the Grants reserves would not be used to pay off the deficit.

11.3 Grants Committee members:

- Noted the provisional pre-audited outturn position and the indicative surplus of £113,000 for 2020/21, the fourth year of the 2017-21 programme, which has been extended by a further year.
- Noted the provisional level of reserves and the financial outlook.

## **12 Performance of Grants Programme 2017-22: April 2017 to March 2021**

12.1 Joanne Watson, Interim Grants Manager, summarised the main points in the report, which provided members with an update on the two priorities of the Grants programme, for the period April 2017 to March 2021:

- Grants Committee had agreed that the 2017 to 2021 programme be extended March 2022 to allow time to develop a new programme that reflected a London which had changed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. The 2017 to 2022 Grants Programme focused on the following priorities: Priority 1 - Combatting Homelessness and Priority 2 - Tackling Sexual and Domestic Violence.

- Grants Committee had funded 13 commissions for the period 2017 to 2022, subject to delivery, compliance with grant conditions and continued availability of resources.
- For Priority 1, over quarters one to 16, performance was 9 per cent above profile. 12 commissions were currently rated Green, and one Amber.
- For Priority 2, over quarters one to 16, overall performance was 9 per cent below profile. Outcome targets have been met or achieved in three out of the six service areas.
- Tender Education and Arts had experienced significant challenges to its service delivery due to school closures. Officers would continue to closely review the Tender's progress to support achievement of agreed outcomes. Tender has adapted its delivery methods and content to meet the varied needs of schools and youth settings during the pandemic, and there was a strong demand for Tender's work.
- Women's Aid had successfully accelerated the launch of its Live Chat service, in order to enable women locked down at home with their perpetrators to reach out for help more easily.
- Shelter had seen a significant increase in the number of clients presenting with complex needs and at crisis point. Additionally, the number of new users presenting who were already rough sleeping had been much higher than previously.
- The programme continues to have a strong focus on equalities groups that were disproportionately affected by homelessness, sexual and domestic violence and poverty. The annual review of equalities was included in the report.

12.2 The Strategy Director provided an update on the no recourse to public funds (NRPF) work and the youth homelessness project:

#### 12.2.1 NRPF:

- The Asian Women's Resource Centre and St Mungo's projects had now been completed. Both organisations had seen high numbers of BME women fleeing abuse, although there were fewer than anticipated asylum cases.
- 141 people who had a NRPF status previously had now had their status changed. NRPF partner, Praxis (a specialist immigration organisation,) is bringing together evidence on the interventions that have the greatest impact in terms of long-term cost savings for London's boroughs. Another partner, Ashiana, had consistently helped their clients to secure permanent residency in the UK under the destitution domestic violence (DDV) concession.
- Most borough referrals were for people being supported by social services, many of whom did not have leave to remain and needed immigration advice.

#### 12.2.2 Youth Homelessness Project:

- Official statistics confirmed that young people had become a significant part of the capital's rough sleeping population over successive lockdown; this included a doubling of the numbers of young women sleeping rough.
- London Councils and the Greater London Authority (GLA) had agreed to co-fund a pilot project for emergency accommodation designed around the needs of young people. They were working with several partners including the London Borough of Hounslow, New Horizon Youth Centre and DuPaul UK.
- The homelessness hotel had been providing holistic support to its clients, including immigration advice and advocacy with local authorities. Demand has been strong, and the hotel has been full for some time.

12.3 In response to a question on the current situation on street homelessness, London Councils officers said that the numbers were reaching pre-pandemic levels, and of

particular concern was the increase in the numbers of young women becoming homeless. Addressing this trend would be one of the features of the new Grants programme.

- 12.4 In response to a question about funding for the new youth homelessness programme, London Councils officers said that funding had been secured for nine months, and a steering group was currently working with MHCLG to secure additional funding. It was expected that the wrap-around service provided by the programme would deliver savings for boroughs and central government in the long run.
- 12.5 In response to a question about the further expected impact of Covid-19 on the performance of the programme, London Councils officers said that all partners had their own risk registers in place, and had put measures in place to ensure they could continue to provide services, including online and hybrid delivery.
- 12.6 In response to a question about the reduction in the number of schemes which helped people into employment, London Councils officers said that this was one of the issues which arose from the pandemic and that partners were working to address.
- 12.7 The Grants Committee noted the report and noted that London Councils' officers and Grants Committee Members share the London Funders Annual Report with relevant borough officers.

### **13 Grants Programme 2017-22: Process for evaluation (presentation by IG Advisers)**

- 13.1 The Strategy Director introduced Gabriela Cervera from IG Advisors; the organisation commissioned to undertake an evaluation of the 2017-2022 pan-London Grants Programme. The evaluation also encompassed projects match-funded through the European Social Fund (ESF). The evaluation aims to identify strengths and weaknesses in grant-making, monitoring, and operational and strategic management, and will provide recommendations for improvement.
- 13.2 Gabriela Cervera presented the evaluation methodology and some early findings to Grants Committee members, and answered their questions:



- A grantee survey had been completed, and one-to-one interviews were being conducted with London Councils Grants' staff and grantees to collect data regarding grant making processes and practice.
- This was an ongoing process, and so far, there was a wide range of feedback from organisations which received grants; mostly positive, but also some mixed and negative. The positive feedback mentioned staff communication, understanding community issues, and being engaged and supportive. The areas for improvement were around consistent effective communication, application and reporting processes, tight timescales, and appropriate KPIs and some partners not feeling able to share feedback. Another challenge was that some partners found it hard to coordinate internally with other partners.
- The scope of the evaluation did not include evaluating the impact of the Grants programme on service users. However, IG Advisers were conducting assessments as to whether London Councils was able to identify that grantees were delivering desired impact for service users.

13.3 The Strategy Director said that the findings of the final report would be used to support the new programme. She added that previous Grants programmes used end-point evaluation, however; it is recommended that for the new programme, evaluation should run throughout the life of the programme to allow for real-time improvements to the programme.

13.4 Grants Committee members noted the report.

## **14 Grants Programme 2022-26: Prospectus for the new programme**

14.1 The Strategy Director introduced this report and said that:

- In March 2021, Grants Committee Members agreed a timetable of activity to enable the new pan-London 2022-2026 grants programme to start from April 2022.
- London Councils had a substantial response to the two consultations undertaken in February/March of 2020 and January/February of 2021, and the two focus groups which included borough officers and members, which

was undertaken in the spring of 2021. This information was used to refine the areas where the boroughs needed the most support.

- The findings from the consultation demonstrated strong support to continue the current programme's services into the new programme. The consultation also highlighted increased multiple, complex needs that required longer-term support, and the requirement for specialist and culturally sensitive support.
- Several priorities were identified in the two workshops, including prevention and early intervention work, ongoing support, support for homeless young people, mental health support and support for perpetrators. However, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime was already working on perpetrator programmes with the Home Office, so it was decided that this would not be a separate strand of work, in order to avoid duplication.
- The consultation and workshops identified key target groups for support: people with mental health needs, learning disabilities, complex needs, ex-offenders, NRPF, LGBTQ+, BME or victims of trafficking or modern slavery.
- A proactive and nuanced approach was needed for the new programme, to reflect the wide range of needs of the different London boroughs.
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has placed new duties on the GLA for the provision of safe accommodation for people fleeing domestic abuse. Grants Committee had agreed to defer the call for proposals for refuge provision to 2022 and roll over the current grant for refuge services in the current programme to 2022-23, in order to give time to develop longer term arrangements with the boroughs and the GLA, to better align funding and provision.
- The Woman's Aid Federation currently provided data services for supporting regional coordination of refuge provision. It was recommended that London Councils awards a grant for the period 2022 to 2026 (@£100,000 in total) to the Women's Aid Federation for continuation of the service.
- 72 organisations submitted expressions of interest for the new Grants programme and 61 organisations, predominantly from the housing and homeless and domestic abuse sectors, attended a market warming event to hear about the new programme and share ideas on effective delivery models and best practice.

- A budget of £150,000 had been built into the programme's costs for evaluation. This should improve the effectiveness of the programme and inform changes as part of the annual review process.
- The prospectus provided an overview of the grants programme and an analysis of the current picture regarding housing and homelessness and domestic and sexual abuse across London.

14.2 The Strategy Director invited Grants Committee members to get involved with scoring applications in September 2021. Briefing sessions would be provided, and members were asked to get in touch with the Strategy Director by 13 August if they were interested. The programme Panel would then assess the initial recommendations to ensure the provision of a cohesive programme.

14.3 In response to a question about supporting BME organisations to access the funding, the Strategy Director said that she would discuss this issue with colleagues from London Funders, who were working with a group of organisations (e.g. Inclusion London) on the issues of equity and inclusion.

14.4 In response to a question about helping smaller organisations participate in the programme, the Strategy Director said that partnership working was vital to the Grants programme and that lead partners worked with and supported smaller organisations.

14.5 In response to a question about promoting the programme locally within boroughs, the Strategy Director said that partners were expected - through grant agreement conditions - to promote their programmes with the boroughs. Should there be any barriers to communication between providers and borough officers, the Grants Team could get involved, including escalating any issues to Grants Committee members.

14.6 In response to a question about early intervention and prevention, the Strategy Director said that the programme was striving to achieve a balance of prevention and intervention with longer term support, and that the funding covered a combination of the two.

14.7 The Strategy Director agreed with members that connecting the work supported by the Grants programme with the Recovery Missions work would play an important part in London's economic recovery.

14.8 Grants Committee members noted the report and:

- noted the arrangements for continuing data services for supporting regional coordination, which would be agreed via the London Councils' Urgency Procedure following the meeting
- noted the London Councils 2022-2026 Pan-London Grants Programme Prospectus which would be agreed via the London Councils' Urgency Procedure following the meeting.

14.9 The Chair thanked members for attending, and gave a special note of thanks to Frank Smith, Director of Resources at London Councils, who would be retiring shortly, for all his hard work over the years on the Grants Committee.

**The meeting finished at 1pm.**